

KELLY'S LIMIT.

The Politician, the Hydrant Key and the Sixth Ward Improvement Association.

(Saturday Evening Post.)

When Kelly was Democratic County Central-Committeeman the air was full of hydrant-keys. So Kelly reached out and grabbed one, and took it home and tried it on the hydrant in front of Larry's saloon at the corner. It fitted beautifully.

Three months later Michael Kelly & Co., Practical Sprinklers, had five vertical-spray wagons at work in the Sixth Ward. The hydrant-key was also at work. It struck the official city hydrants like Moses' rod and the water gushed out gratuitously. When the monthly water-bills were emitted from the City Hall to the sprinkling companies none ever made its way to Kelly. He had never applied for the hydrant-key. He had found it.

Kelly was very good at finding things. Things came his way and fluttered around his smile like sand-flies around a lamp.

The first thing he had found, after fortifying his youthful health by a long career on the baseball field, had been an appropriate position as clerk in the Health Department. His weight and complexion seemed to qualify him to adorn and to exemplify that department.

During the course of the first forenoon he appeared before the Commissioner of Health with an expression of just resentment on his face.

"That fellow MacManaman's been giving me orders," said he. "I just wanted you to stop him."

"What you are talking about," said the Commissioner. "MacManaman's chief clerk. He's got a right to give you orders."

Kelly was stunned. Then he smiled slowly as the full extent of MacManaman's perfidy laid itself bare.

"Sure, he's been keeping it from you," said Kelly. "He ain't told you anything about it. I don't blame him, but you ought to know."

"Know what?" said the Commissioner irritably.

"He's a Connaught man," said Kelly, still smiling at the thought of the joke that MacManaman had been playing on the Commissioner.

It was the Commissioner's turn to be stunned.

"You're crazy, Kelly," he said. "Run along."

Kelly's smile was replaced with a flush of amazement and of scorn. "I won't run along," he said. "It ain't right, and I won't stand for it. A man from Connaught! Me take orders from a man from Connaught! Just because he's got to be chief clerk! Not while I can remember where my mother is buried!"

This speech made Kelly with the Mayor. Before closing time in the afternoon, the gossip of the City Hall had apprised his Honor of the fact that in the Health Department there was a new Irishman whose ideas of business organization were such that he refused to take orders from the chief clerk on the ground that the latter came from some district in Ireland of which his mother had disappeared.

His Honor was delighted. He was a tired man with weary eyes and a kindly, indulgent smile. Nothing pleased him more than the foibles of his subordinates or their scruples. In the gray sea of politics these foibles or scruples (they looked much alike to him) were so many charming little whitecaps, breaking into froth and relieving the monotony.

He sent for Kelly.

WHAT IT WILL DO.

A woman buys a sewing machine for what it will do; not as an article of furniture. A man carries a watch to tell him the time; not as an investment of surplus capital. The same principle which will relieve and cure. The friend in need must be a friend indeed, something, or somebody, with a reputation. There should be no guesswork in treating disease. People have the right to know what a medicine is, and what it will do, before they take it. It must have behind it an open record of benefit to others for the same diseases, a series of cures that proves its merit and inspires confidence. It is because it has such a record that

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his teeth were set and his eyes had the look of a man who is searching for his enemy. The Mayor had put him off with the transparent subterfuge that Mrs. O'Brien was over eighty years old, and that a somewhat younger woman might be more satisfactory in carrying pails and in scrubbing floors.

"I hate a knocker," said Kelly that night over Larry's bar. "And I'll find that fellow who's been knocking me if it takes me a thousand years. If a man can go into politics and get some favors for himself I ain't got no kick coming, eh? Ain't that right? But when a fellow don't want anything for himself, but just goes around and knocks another fellow and keeps him from getting what he wants, I ain't got no time for him. That's what, ain't it? That's good sense. I bet it's one of them fellows from the Citizens' Sixth Ward Neighborhood Improvement Association. Ever see such a bunch of knockers? Never around except when they've got a kick! Did they do anything for the Mayor when he was running? Not on your life! But just listen to the roar they make about the streets! And did you see the street-cleaning expert they've got from Boston? Looks like one of these British officers you used to see the pictures of in the Boer War. I put up my money for the Mayor when he was elected. That's what I did. I didn't see any of them Improvement fellows around then. All that they want is to have the city work for them without them doing anything for the man that's got to be elected to run the city. Cheap trick, ain't it? If any of them's been knocking me, I'll show him up to the Mayor till he's good and sick."

Six months passed while Kelly was searching for his concealed foe. It was a time of great mystery and the days were long. Every morning Kelly came down to the City Hall and resumed his labor of exploration. Every evening he took the car for home with his antagonists still undiscovered.

The Mayor was reticent. All that he would say was that as far as janitresses were concerned he could get younger and stronger women for the same wages.

"But Mrs. O'Brien needs the job," said Kelly. "She ain't got enough to eat."

For once the Mayor's clear course of duty looked dubious to him. He frowned and hesitated. But then, "I can't help it," he said. "I've got to get the most I can out of the city's money."

The Water Commissioner was as reticent as the Mayor. Every day Kelly dropped in to chat with the custodian of the hydrant-keys. And every day he lounged by the Water Commissioner's desk. But there was no response.

The keys were all labeled, ticketed, pigeonholed and card-catalogued. They no longer lay about loose on the tops of the desks. They no longer protruded promiscuously from the pockets of friendly clerks.

"I've got nothing against you, Kelly," said the Water Commissioner. "But everybody else is paying for their keys and for their water. You can't expect me to make an exception for you."

Kelly was more chagrined and more bewildered than ever as he dropped heavily into a seat on a homeward-bound car that evening. He was very tired. His sprinkling business had been rapidly dropping away from him. He was obliged now to pay a hundred dollars a month for his water, and he had also been compelled to make a payment of fifty dollars for one of the new breed of ticketed and card-catalogued hydrant-keys. He longed for the old, beatified, phantom kind of key which just grew out of the atmosphere without any preliminary financial ceremonies. Under the new system he hadn't been able to meet the competition of the other sprinkling firms. He had done his best. He had frequented the City Hall from morning to night. He had walked himself sick searching for the inscrutable influence which had poisoned the mind of the administration against him. His efforts had been vain. He felt beaten. But just then the car swung round the corner and the familiar sight of Larry's saloon and of his faithful admirers standing in the doorway filled him with renewed confidence.

"I'll find them yet," said Kelly to himself as he dropped off the car.

"Have a drink, boys," he continued, walking happily through the crowd into the saloon and jingling two quarters together in his pocket.

Larry with an automatic impulse from days gone by, looked at him expecting him to draw out a roll of bills and hold them in his hands. He failed to do so. Larry came back to date with a jerk.

"The drinks are on me," he said brusquely.

"No, they're not," said Kelly. "Sure they are," said Larry. "What'll you have gentlemen?"

Kelly looked at him sharply and got very red.

"I'm going to buy," said Kelly with

an edge on his voice. "Can't I buy if I want to?"

It was plain from Larry's face that he was convicted. And the men in the room had a fellow-consciousness of guilt as they drew up to the bar and drank the drink which each of them wished he was paying for. Everybody wanted to speak.

Nobody spoke. For the first time in his life Kelly himself hunted for something to say without finding it.

The empty glasses were set down on the table and Kelly walked back by the slot-machine and dragged a chair toward the window.

Then O'Brien thought of a subject for conversation. He was still in the sprinkling business and he thought Kelly would be interested in a piece of trade gossip.

"What d'you think?" he said. "I hear the Sixth Ward Improvement Association's got a permit for free water for sprinkling and the Mayor's given them a free hydrant-key."

Kelly rose from his seat very white.

"What did you say? A free hydrant-key?"

"Yep. They've raised a subscription for cutting down the weeds on the vacant lots and for filling up the holes in the pavements. And they've hired fellows to come from all over the United States to lecture for them and to tell them how the city is run. So the Mayor's given them a free hydrant-key because they're mixing up in public affairs and he's grateful to them. It's all about making the city beautiful."

Kelly's roar of rage called in all the idlers from around the corner. "They're the fellows that's been after me!" he cried. "They got the Mayor to take my key away from me and now they've got one of their own. If they'd come to me and asked me to get them a key when my pull was good I'd have done it for them all right. You know that."

But they had to go around and stick a knife into me. When I see his Honor tomorrow, I'll find out about this."

The next morning Kelly got up a little bit earlier than usual. On his way through the big corridor to the Mayor's office, he met the Water Commissioner and immediately asked him who was backing the Sixth Ward Improvement Association. The Water Commissioner refused to say. He remarked simply that the Improvement Association was doing a great deal of public-spirited work and that the free water was a reward for its benevolent activity.

His Honor took the same tack.

"They're doing a great deal for the ward," he said. "We have to do something for them to keep them interested."

"Who is their friend?" said Kelly.

"I don't know," said the Mayor. "They just wrote me a letter."

Kelly opened his mouth and looked at the Mayor with a glare of incredulity. Then his shoulders sank weakly and he turned without a word and made slowly for the door.

An hour afterward, as he walked up the steps of his house, there was a boy waiting for him on the porch with a dog. The dog was limping and the boy was crying.

"What's the matter?" said Kelly, rumpling the boy's hair with his big hand.

"Automobile," said the boy looking down the street. "The man threw me a dollar and told me to get a doctor to fix the dog's leg up. But I thought I'd come to you first."

"That's right," said Kelly.

Half an hour later the dog's leg was wrapped up in a long roll of cloth and Kelly and the boy were sitting on the steps examining him carefully to see if there were any other parts of him that had been injured.

"I told you the man gave me a dollar," said the boy finally, talking a bill out of his pocket and laying it down in front of Kelly.

"Keep your money, kid," said Kelly. "I'm not very strong now, but I guess I can look out for the dogs and the kids." Then, after a pause, he added: "They're the only constits I've got left."

Just then an automobile stopped in front of the house.

"That's him that ran over the dog," said the boy.

A man jumped out of the machine.

"Oh, there's the dog I ran over!" he said. "Hope he's getting better. If you need any more money come around and see me. Sorry I can't stop now. I've got a lot of things to do. It's you I want to see, Mr. Kelly. You know those new sprinkling wagons we've put on for the Improvement Association? Well, we understand that you haven't been working for some time and that you would like something to do. So if you will take a job driving one of those wagons we'll pay you good wages. Three dollars a day. Can you do it?"

Kelly rose somewhat unsteadily.

"Before I'd take a job from you," he said. "I'd go to digging in a ditch."

He said nothing more for a minute, while his blazing eye and quivering lip held the President of the Improvement Association equally speechless.

"Every man's got his limit," said Kelly. "This is mine."

The President of the Improvement Association was puzzled and uncomfortable. He edged away a little bit. "You mean," he stammered—"You mean that you don't want the job?"

"You leave me alone!" said Kelly thickly. "I've got this here dog to tie up." He turned to the dog and began to work on him. The President of the Improvement Association stood silent and irresolute. Kelly continued to work on the dog. The President of the Improvement Association mumbled a few words of bewildered apology and walked back to his automobile.

Mrs. Kelly came out from the house.

"Did you turn him down, Mike?" she said.

"I did, Mary," said Kelly. "It was my limit. Here's your dog, kid. Run along. I'll fix you up to be a policeman some day. * * * No, I won't, either. Oh, Mary, they're all against me now!"

"Come on inside, Mike," said Mrs. Kelly.

So they went inside together and sat down together in the little front parlor, and together they watched the men going into Larry's saloon.

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No man who needs my treatment will doubt my ability to cure him in the face of this offer, and if you, reader, belong in the class of half-men, I want you to come to me at once and let me show you that I can do for you what I have done for thousands of other men as bad or worse off.

I bank on Electricity. It is a power that will put more life into anything living. It will restore paralyzed limbs; it is life to weakened organs; it drives away pain. It is doing these things every day, and why not for you? Are you incurable? Are you so far gone that there is no hope for you? Are you a physical wreck? If you are, then come to me. I can cure you, and I will. What is the use dragging yourself around among men feeling that you are not like them, that you are not the man you ought to be, when you might as well hold up your head and feel like a two-year old?

Don't you want to feel the vim and life in your nerves as you used to; to see the sparkle in the eyes; to have the spring in your step and the lightness in your heart that go with vigorous manhood? Life is too short to miss any of the pleasures that belong to it; so why don't you enjoy them as long as Nature intended?

Manila, P. I.

Dr. McLaughlin—Dear Sir: In response to your request for a report of the work of your Belt in my case, will say that I have laid it aside some time since, for it has cured me completely. Instead of weighing only 139 pounds, I have gained 51 pounds, and 169 pounds is my regular weight now. I will not try to thank you in this letter, but I will be in San Francisco shortly, when I call upon you and tell you personally how grateful I am for what you have done for me, and for the interest you showed in me while I was under your care.

Yours very truly,

F. K. ROBB.

I can take any man who has a spark of vitality left in his veins and fan it into a flame and make him feel like a Hercules! I can help a rheumatic to drop his cane and crutch and hop around like a boy. I had a patient come into my office recently and jump over a chair to show me that he was young again.

How do I do it? By filling the blood, the nerves, the organs and muscles with electric energy—that is what Nature gave them at first; that is what they have lost when you break down.

That is how I cure, and that is why I am so sure that I can cure. You have the body that needs the power, and I have the power and know how to use it.

Honolulu, T. H.

Dr. M. A. McLaughlin—Dear Sir: Your letter of the 24th inst. came to hand in due time, and I will admit my negligence in not informing you of what your Belt had done for me, but I must say that I am perfectly satisfied with it in every respect. Your treatment has done more for me than all the medicine I took during my six or seven years' search for a cure. Even the first few weeks' use had a remarkable effect. I felt like a new man and things that were almost too heavy for me to lift previously, had no weight at all. I slept well and ate heartily. My improvement was gradual and unmistakable until I loaned the Belt to him, with as gratifying results as it had brought about in my own case. I have recommended the superiority of the treatment to many of my friends, and certainly cannot thank you enough for your valuable services.

Yours very truly,

J. C. CROWDER.

Do you notice how enthusiastic my patients seem to be? See the praise they give me! They are all men full of an idea, overflowing with expression, just as any one who is immensely pleased.

If you have been paying money to doctors and taking nasty drugs for years, and after getting no benefit from it all you find a new lease on life after using my Belt for a month, you will be enthusiastic, too. You will want to go out on the highways and shout, and you won't care who knows that you were once a weakling, because now you are cured and a man again.

Why say more! Isn't this enough? Aren't you convinced that I can cure you? If you want more proof, tell me where you are and I can give you names of people near you. You can ask them and ask them what I have done for them. The word of an honest man cured is worth more than all argument, and I have thousands of them.

Now don't delay. Enjoy all the happiness you may in this world. You can have none without health and strength.

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UNANIMOUS.

"And, gentlemen of the jury, so say you all?" inquired the judge of a certain Arkansas circuit, after the verdict had been brought in.

"Well, the rest of us do, and I reckon I ort to," responded the smallest and most paltry-looking member of the assortment of peers. "You see, I originally differed with, or from—whichever is proper—the rest of these yere gentlemen; but they beat me all holler playin' checkers, downed me at mumblety-peg, and then every one of 'em, when we wrestled, grab-holds, to see which side of the question was right, throwed me flat and set on me. So, all things considered, and keepin' to the agreement, I say, with the balance of 'em, that the prisoner at the bar—I sorter forgit what his name is—is guilty as charged."